

Four Square Variations

Final Play (Last Play, Last Round, and Final Rally): In Australia, this term is used to denote the last round of play due to the end of the break period. This would usually confirm the winner for the day. Final Play could include a duel of the top two squares.

Friendsies: Allows the players to play balls that did not land in their square and would have otherwise made another player out for the purpose of continuing game play.

Grandfather Clock: All players on the court take turns throwing the ball in the air and clapping as many times as they can. The player with the lowest number of claps is out.

Holding (Grabbing, etc.): Usually a player can only hit the ball and not hold it, but some rules allow holding the ball for half a second or less if using a special move.

Ice Cream Cone: During game play and when the server has the ball he/she must yell out "ice cream cone". When the server does, they grab the ball and run to the center of the four square. The other players must rush to get their feet outside of the boundaries. The last player to get their feet outside of the boundaries is out.

Intercepting (Poaching, etc.): Term used for a player other than the intended receiver grabbing and/or hitting the ball in play. This often happens if the ball passes through one player's square but does not bounce in it.

King's Court: Disputes are resolved by the serving player instead of a line judge. Land mines: a portion of a square is an automatic out for the player in that square, marked in some way (chalk, tape, etc.); customarily the portion increases with increasing square number.

Letters: If the squares are labeled, all players must touch the letter in their square as soon as this is called; the last person to do so is out.

Liner: (Laser lines, poisonous lines, etc.): When the ball hits a line, the player that hit it is usually out, although a myriad of rules have been made up for this occurrence (see "Liner Mini-Games" below).

Lumberjacks (Battle Royale, etc.): When a lot of people are playing, the extras circle around the court (or standing on the circle if there is a circle rule). Those standing around the court are the lumberjacks. When the ball is hit out, the lumberjacks hit the ball back in so the game does not stop. When a player is called out, the remaining players continue against each other. The game ends when only one of the four original players remains.

Master Key Lock: The rules cannot be changed unless the person who called this gets out of the game.

Midget World: The King may call "Midget World" before they serve and all players must play in squatting position for the match.

Mini Michael Jordan: The next round is played with all players in the squatting position. "Must accept" (Ready or not): A receiver must hit the serve regardless of interference or if they are not ready.

Off-Serve: The player who received service is required to hit the ball back to the server.

Waterfall - all feet are on center - server drops the ball, if anyone doesn't move in time, they are it.

Open Book: Any player can change the rules regardless of whether or not they are the server if this is enforced.

Passback: If a player calls Passback during a game, the next person must hit it back to that player.

Pick Up: Players are allowed to pick up the ball when it bounces at a height specified by those playing or the server. In some places, rules require players to call "pick Up", "picks" or "grabs" when doing this.

Play On: This is called when a decision is made to continue play, despite the call being close. "Play On" must be called immediately by the judge or server after the bounce, or a dispute may occur.

Poison: In Australia, a person of any rank may call poison if he or she is not ready. The game continues without the player and the player resumes his / her participation with the call "medicine".

Popcorn (different from Bobbling): A player calls out "Popcorn x" with x being any number. If called during play, the receiving player must throw the ball in the air, clap the number of times specified, and then catch the ball. Or, the king throws the ball in the air and claps one or more times before catching it. The next player must do the same but with one more clap than the king. Each subsequent throw must increase in number of claps, and failure to complete a toss results in an out (sometimes with two tries per player)

Revenge: When the server is out, he may choose to call Revenge, or King's Revenge. The player who is now server must engage in a Death Rally with the former server (See Death Rally above).

Rolling (Bowling, etc.): A player hits the ball so low that the ball rolls. Usually the player who rolled it is out.

Sentences: In this version, the server begins a sentence by saying one word, and each play must continue the sentence or end it by saying period. If they fail to continue the sentence logically, they are out. (An example: "I love playing four square period").

Services: When the ball is about to be served, any player may call "Service" and the server must automatically play the ball to them, unless they chose to overrule it, at which point no other player may call service on that serve. If multiple people attempt it, the first to call is given the honor. A player may also call "Service no overrules" which will force the server to play the ball to him.

Sharking (Skunk, Sting, etc.): Aiming directly for any part of an opponent's body rather than playing it normally. If the shark hits the opponent, the opponent is out. If the opponent dodges the ball, the shark is usually out (because the ball did not bounce in his or her own square).

Slamming ((High Bounces, Treetops, Cherry Bombs, etc.): Hitting the ball in such a way that it bounces a considerable distance over the receiver's head. More than for being hard to receive, this move is often discouraged for risk of the ball becoming stuck on a roof, in a tree, etc. Defensive moves against slams, such as using one's body to stop the ball from flying out of bounds, are often given names themselves, such as "Tiananmen Square".

Sleepover: all players sit down with their legs apart touching feet with the person on either side of them. All the players roll around the ball until it touches a foot. The player who rolled the ball before it touched the foot is out.

Spinning ((Texas) Twisters, Screwballs, Peppermint Sticks, etc): Hitting the ball, usually with both hands, in such a way that a spin is imparted on it, causing it to bounce unusually.

Style Points: In some variations, style points are awarded to players who exhibit excellent or rare form during play, and/or artistically hit the ball (such as under one's legs); depending on the rules at that school or location, style points can be used to exempt a player from one out, or award other bonuses as players agree upon them.

Tapping (Babies, Tiny Tims, etc.): Hitting the ball in such a way that it barely bounces off the ground and likewise goes across a very small horizontal distance.

Toesies: A variation on "Chicken Feet" (see above) in which one player aims the ball directly at another player's toes. If the ball connects all players must rush to the center and place their toes in the middle. The last player to put their toes in is eliminated.

Two and Up: If the ball bounces in one player's square twice before the owner of the square hits the ball, the player can tap the ball upward into another player's square while saying "two and up" and not be eliminated.

Typewriter: A rule in which a player grabs or baubles the ball, moves close to an adjacent square, and bounces the ball in that square a predetermined number of times. The usual variant is to spell out the opponent's name, one letter per bounce. If the player successfully completes the move, the opponent is out. If the opponent hits the ball to disrupt the spelling, the person who initiated the typewriter is out.

Underhand: This means that all hits are with an open hand, palm(s) up. This brings the game down low to the ground and makes your quads ache the next day. "Underhand" is stereotypically associated with beginners, but in four square even the best players sometimes can't survive a round of underhand.

Mini Games

Creative players around the world dream up exciting varieties that break out of normal game play entirely. This Side and Line Games section will lay out some of the best known mini-games to take place on (or off) the court.

When the ball hits a line (or in some cases, a wall), the game will usually stop with a player being eliminated, a special rule will be enforced, or the players will go directly into a mini-game.

Possibilities include the following:

- The person who hit the line automatically getting "out".
- The server calling a re-do.
- The players continuing play as if the ball was in one of the players' squares, and if no player continues, it is a re
- Multiple players being eliminated if the line between them is hit by the ball.

- A dispute resolution, as outlined in the Disputes section above.

Some servers call one of the following side-games:

- **Shark Attack:** The person calling Shark Attack may hold the ball and run around on the lines to tag another player, and whoever they tag is eliminated.
- **Bubble (not to be confused with baubling/bubbling):** If a player calling Liner chooses Bubbles, he or she stands in the intersection, bounces a ball and say "Bubbles times n" The number they call is the amount they have to let the ball bounce for before normal game proceeds. If the ball is about to stop bouncing, a player may tap it up. After the ball has bounced said number of times, normal play continues with the player whose court it lands on hitting it next.
- **Rocks:** If a player calls Rocks, they bounce the ball hard and slam it into an opponent's court, usually a corner to make it harder. After the hit has been done normal play proceeds. This is also called Footy Rucks because it resembles a ruck contest in Australian rules football.
- **Taps:** If a player calls Liner and chooses Taps, they place the ball on the line; at that point, any player can run up and lightly tap the ball to another players square.

→ **Tea Party:** A player returning a ball to another player can call a "Tea Party." When this occurs, the match becomes an intense bout between these two players until one is eliminated.

Special Gameplay Rules

7-Up: Each player that hits the ball must call out a number one higher than the previous until the number seven is reached. The one who is hitting the ball on 7 or a number that ends in 7 must skip that number; failure to do so results in the player being out.

Aerials: This allows balls to be hit in the air without bouncing first.

Around The World: Any player in possession of the ball may call Around the World regardless of rank at any moment. If it is called, the calling player can hit it to an adjacent square, and that person must hit it to the remaining adjacent square until it reaches the player who called it, at which point the game returns to normal. A "permanent" version may be called, in which case the sequence must continue until a player gets out, even if it reaches the caller.

Around the World: touch the front corner with foot then proceed touching all other corners of player's square. Last one to touch the center square is out

Backboards (Treetops, Double tap): Hitting the ball upwards into the air one time before hitting it into another player's square, often used to give a player a better aim.

Baubling (Bubbles, Double Touches, Popcorn, Juggling, etc.): A way to get around holding the ball, one bounces it lightly between their hands before hitting it to another square.

Black Jack: If a player catches the ball cleanly before it lands in her square, the player who hit the ball is out. It usually forces the game to be played low and fast and creates a different dynamic. If this is played with Double Taps, you must still catch the ball on the first hit.

Black Magic: King says "black magic" while twirling a ball in hands before throwing it at another player. When they throw it, they yell "dare!" If the player does not catch it, they must perform a dare of the Kings designation. OR. Has different connotations depending on where the game is played. In one variation, a player can catch another player's ball above the waist during play and call Black Magic on the hitter, who must then do any number of actions for the rest of the game such as standing on one foot, left handed play only, etc. In another variation, catching the ball will make either the striker or catcher out depending on who calls "Black Magic" first.

Bottle Caps (Isolation, etc.): The server may invoke this at any point during play, on any of the other three players. Once a player has been declared bottle capped, he or she is put on pause and must squat for the remainder of the round, or until their bottle cap is revoked by the same server who declared it. This player's square also becomes out-of-bounds until the bottle cap ends.

Bomb: The server places the ball in the middle of the court and calls Bomb. All players must then touch the ball; the last one to touch the ball is out.

Body Hits (or parts): The player is allowed to use a specified part of their body to hit the ball, their head or foot for example. In some countries, this rule is called "Soccer Rules" and the ball may only be hit by the head or foot.

Body Language: This rule allows players to use any part of their body to hit the ball. Some players like this because of the added use of feet.

drop to ground & back up before touching the ball

Bus Stop: A rule where two hits are allowed. There are three types of bus stops. If the ball is stopped in the air, bounces once in that person's square, then hit again, this is one variation. The other variation is if the ball bounces in the person's square, is hit and then hit again without another bounce. The third variation involves the King to call "bus stop," and the last player to touch the inner corner of their square with their foot is out.

Bounce Stop: Like a bus stop, in that the person hits the ball twice, but with one more bounce. The ball bounces once, is hit by that player, it bounces again in that person's square, then is hit again. With standard bounce stops, the second bounce must be in the person's square, but a special "out of bounds bounce stop" can be called which allows the second bounce to occur out of bounds.

Bus Stop: King calls bus stop and another player's name before throwing the ball away from the court. All players count to twenty while the player whose name was called runs to retrieve ball and return to king. If they fail to do so by the count of 20, the player is out.

Catching: When the person catches the ball before it bounces in their square, dubbing the passer out (e.g. King serves to Jack, Jack catches it before bounces in Jack's square. King is now out). Usually the catching player must say some kind of code word when catching, which varies from school to school, or he himself is out. *One handed catches ONLY!*

Catching between one's legs (The Annihilator): If this is called, and a player catches the ball between his or her legs (typically between the knees), all players except for the person to catch the ball are out. The person completing the play then moves to the serving position.

Categories: In this version, the server names a category (e.g. types of drinks or girls' names) before play starts, and each player must name something in that category (that nobody has named yet in the round) when they hit the ball. If a player fails to come up with an accurate item in the category, they are out.

Cherry: In Australia, players are not normally allowed to hit the ball in another player's square without hitting into their own square first. However, it is sometimes accepted to hit the ball into another player's square on the full if the players call "cherry." The player must hit the ball upward, i.e. they cannot hit it downward or slam it into someone else's square. Sometime cherry can be abbreviated to just "chez" to make it easier to say. Other variants are "e-mail" and "postman".

Cherry Bomb: When a player grabs the ball and throws it hard into any square. The attacking player must say "Cherry Bomb". This is generally the hardest ball to return.

"Chicken _____" or "Duck _____" (Shoe Shine, etc.): When the ball hits any part of the body other than the hands or chest: a "Chicken Foot" is when the ball hits a player's foot, etc. If "Chicken Feet" is enforced, the player who hit the other player's feet with the ball is out instead of the hit player.

Circle rule: This rule applies when a circle is drawn around the court, at least four feet from the boundary line. When burning an opponent, a player must hit so the first bounce after the burn occurs inside the circle. Otherwise, that player is out. Aside from preventing lost or hard-to-retrieve balls, this rule makes slams more difficult, requiring "power players" to alter their game and use more skill.

Corners: All players must go to the outside corner of their square. The last person to do so is out.

Death Rally: If the server chooses to allow them, any player may call a "Death Rally" (also known as "Battle", "Duel", "War", "Showdown", "Tea Party", etc). The two players may only hit the ball to each other until one of these two players is eliminated. If a player calls a Death Rally off at the right moment and quickly puts the ball in another it is called a Sneak or Stealth Attack, and the player who was attacked will often not be able to react to the sudden attack.

"Duel" or "Teams": At any time any player may call deul or teams. They will team up with an adjacent square against the other two squares. Such as 4 & 3 vs. 2 & 1. The ball may bounce only once in one square but twice in a teams rectangle. When an out is made both players on the team are out.

"Do Over" or "Redo" (term varies from school to school): Term used when there is a dispute, players are unsure of a decision, or the line judge determines that the previous play was too close to call or invalidated by an outside interruption. The ball is re-served with no eliminations.

Dodge Ball: If a player is able to catch the ball before it bounces in any square or out of bounds, the game play shifts to Dodge Ball, wherein all players must abide by the standard rules for the game Dodge Ball. This entails the player with the ball not taking more than three steps, and attempting to throw another player out by striking them with the ball (recommended only with soft large rubber balls). If the target player catches the ball or the ball misses all players the player who threw the ball is out.

Double Taps: This means any player may hit the ball two times in the air after it has bounced once in her square. Similar to a one person volleyball team, this is an effective technique for setting yourself up for a spike.

Double Bounces: The ball can (or sometimes must) bounce twice in a player's square before he hits it. If it bounces any other number of times before the receiver hits it, he is out. If it bounces once in and then once out of a player's square, the hitter is out.

Dot to dot: all players must touch the center corner, the back corner, and then the center corner again. The last player to return to the center is out

Fair Serve (No Blood on Serve, etc.): A common rule in which players cannot get out on the serve. For example, if the server hits the ball out on serve, he is given a second chance; likewise, if a player misses the ball after it is served to him, he also gets a "redo." The term "Outs on Serves" is sometimes used to indicate that there is no Fair Serve; such a rule is usually invoked to make the game move faster.

Fair Return: Usually called along with "Fair Serve" in a two-square variant. A Fair Return is one that can easily be hit by the server after the initial serve is made.

Fairy Bomb: When a player catches the ball they may jump in the air as if about to throw a cherry bomb but instead softly say, "Fairy bomb," and lightly drop the ball in another player's square.

Faking (Psyche Out, Teardrop, etc.): A hit where a player acts like he will slam the ball, but instead barely taps it so the other player will miss it.